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House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure DEMOCRATS

For Immediate Release
Wednesday, June 15, 2005

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Oberstar: Transportation Appropriations Bill Would Mean the End of Amtrak ***Appropriators end funding for long-distance routes***

WASHINGTON—All fourteen of nation's long-distance passenger train routes and two short-distance trains stand to be eliminated under cuts to Amtrak's budget pending before the House Appropriations Committee.

The cuts would mean the elimination of our national passenger rail system, according to Rep. James L. Oberstar (Minn.), Ranking Democratic Member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Oberstar's statement follows:

HOUSE REPUBLICAN APPROPRIATORS WOULD SHUT DOWN AMTRAK *June 15, 2005*

This morning, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury, and Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, District of Columbia denied Amtrak's request for \$1.8 billion. Amtrak's President and Chief Executive Officer, David Gunn, has stated that Amtrak would be unable to operate a national system of intercity passenger trains if less than \$1.8 billion is appropriated in FY2006. Despite this fact, the Committee approved only \$550 million for Amtrak – far short of what virtually every independent observer, including the Department of Transportation's Inspector General, has stated that Amtrak must have to simply continue current operations.

The train routes that would most likely be eliminated are:

- **the Sunset Limited** from Orlando to Los Angeles via Jacksonville, Tallahassee, Pensacola, Mobile, New Orleans, Houston, San Antonio, and Tucson;
- **the Texas Eagle** from Chicago to Los Angeles via Springfield, St. Louis, Little Rock, Dallas, Austin, San Antonio, and Tucson;

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- **the Coast Starlight** from Seattle to Los Angeles via Portland, Eugene, Sacramento, San Jose and Santa Barbara;
- **the Three Rivers** from New York to Chicago via Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and Pittsburgh;
- **the Southwest Chief** from Chicago to Los Angeles via Kansas City, Topeka, Albuquerque, and Flagstaff;
- **the Cardinal** from Washington to Chicago via Charleston, WV, Cincinnati, and Indianapolis;
- **the Capitol Limited** from Washington to Chicago via Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Toledo;
- **the California Zephyr** from Chicago to Oakland via Omaha, Lincoln, Denver, Salt Lake City, Reno, and Sacramento;
- **the Lake Shore Limited** from New York to Chicago via Albany, Syracuse, Buffalo, Cleveland, and Toledo;
- **the Crescent** from New York to New Orleans via Philadelphia, Wilmington, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Greensboro, Charlotte, Greenville, Atlanta, and Birmingham;
- **the Palmetto and Silver Service** from New York to Miami via Philadelphia, Wilmington, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Richmond, Charleston, SC, Savannah, Jacksonville, Tampa, and Ft. Lauderdale; and
- **the City of New Orleans** from Chicago to New Orleans via Memphis;
- **the Hoosier State** from Chicago to Indianapolis; and
- **the Auto Train**, which takes the passenger and their vehicle nonstop from Lorton, Virginia to Florida.

Only train service along the Northeast Corridor and several state-supported routes would continue. Many cities, including Dallas, Denver, New Orleans, San Antonio, Salt Lake City, Tucson, Atlanta, Little Rock, Pittsburgh, and Houston would lose all passenger train service. **We would no longer have a national intercity passenger rail system.**

Despite claims that the states will pick up the costs of the long-distance train services or that these operations ought to be provided by the private sector, the most likely outcome is that our Nation will lose its national network of intercity trains and dozens of cities and rural areas will lose all intercity passenger rail service.

This outcome is neither what the American people want nor what our transportation system needs. We need to expand our transportation options, not eliminate choices.

As Congress moves forward with consideration of the Transportation Appropriations bill, I will work to increase funding for Amtrak to ensure that our Nation maintains its national system of intercity passenger rail and we continue to provide rail service to cities and rural communities throughout the United States.

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